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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/670,455	09/26/2000	PETER POTIER	10.0787	3618
22474	7590	05/03/2006	EXAMINER	
DOUGHERTY CLEMENTS 1901 ROXBOROUGH ROAD SUITE 300 CHARLOTTE, NC 28211				STRANGE, AARON N
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
		2153		

DATE MAILED: 05/03/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/670,455	POTIER ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Aaron Strange	2153

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 February 2006.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-25 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
- Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 24 and 35 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.
2. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-23, filed 2/4/06, have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
3. With regard to claim 1, and Applicant's assertion that the combination of Stevenson and Simmons does not teach or suggest "wherein the predetermined number of packets is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process" (Page 11, Line q19 to Page 12, Line 2 of Remarks), the Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Stevenson clearly discloses that the predetermined number of packets (burst size) is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process (burst size is negotiated during set up of a burst connection)(at least Page 56, Lines 13-15).
4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 2-23 are substantially identical to the argument presented for claim 1, and are not persuasive for the same reasons.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1-4, 6, 8, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevenson et al. in view of Applicant's admitted prior art in further view of Simmons et al. (US 6,167,054).

7. With regard to claims 1 and 6, Stevenson discloses a method of managing distributed statistical data retrieval in a network device, comprising:

b. sending a predetermined (Page 52, Lines 17-20) number of packets from the card to the central process (a burst) (Page 54, Lines 19-21), wherein each packet contains at least a portion of the file, and wherein the predetermined number of packets is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process (burst size is negotiated during set up of a burst connection)(at least Page 56, Lines 13-15);

c. sending an acknowledge request (set End of Burst flag) to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number and (Page 54, Lines 19-21);

d. controlling the number of packets sent from the card to the central process, including:

sending an acknowledge packet indicating a time that the card can resume sending packets to the central process from the central process to the card (Page 55, Lines 17-18 and Page 68, Lines 31-35); and

repeating steps b,c, and d when the acknowledge packet is received at the card and the indicated time has elapsed (Multiple burst transactions may be executed) (Page 55, Lines 1-7).

Stevenson does not disclose the step of gathering statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically or that the file transferred comprises statistical data or that the time is based on an estimate of a time interval needed by the central process to process a sufficient number of the received packets to reduce the number of packets awaiting processing below a predetermined threshold.

The system disclosed by Stevenson is directed toward the transfer of a large file, without limitation regarding the type of file transferred. In the background of the present application, Applicant discloses that statistical data may be retrieved from distributed modules within a network device and stored in non-volatile memory. In addition, this data may be moved to a workstation for processing (Application, Page 1, Lines 6-11). Since this data is stored in a file in non-volatile memory, and can potentially be a large amount of data, it could benefit from being transferred in the manner disclosed by Stevenson.

Simmons discloses a method for providing flow control for network

transmissions in which the receiver's data buffer level is compared to various thresholds to determine the appropriate length of time that the sending station should stop sending data in order to give the receiver enough time to process packets in the buffer. The closer to full that the buffer is, the longer the sending station is told to wait before resuming the transfer of packets (Col 12, Lines 28-49). This ensures that the data buffer will not overflow and result in lost packets by giving the receiver time to clear out the buffers (Col 13, Lines 32-34). When the sender receives the pause frame, it stops transmitting frames for the duration of time specified in the frame (Col 1, Lines 51-54). This method of controlling the flow between the sender and receiver is advantageous since it allows flow control to be initiated before the receive buffer is full, at which time data will already have been lost. It also allows the amount of pause time to be variable which makes the throughout more efficient (Col 1, Lines 55-66).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to gather statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically and transmit the gathered statistical data to the central process as well as compare the number of packets in the receiver's buffer to a predetermined threshold, estimate when the number of packets to be processed will be below the threshold, and inform the sending station how long to wait before sending more packets.

8. With regard to claim 2, Stevenson further discloses that sending an acknowledgement request to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the

predetermined number, comprises: sending the acknowledge request embedded within the last packet in the predetermined number (Page 54, Figure 6).

9. With regard to claim 3, while the system disclosed by Stevenson in view of Applicant's admitted prior art and Simmons shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to specifically disclose that sending an acknowledge request to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number, comprises: sending the acknowledge request in an acknowledge request packet separate from the last packet in the predetermined number.

However, it is clear that sending the acknowledge request in an acknowledge request packet separate from the last packet in the predetermined number would not change the functionality of the invention. The acknowledge request serves only to notify the receiver that the burst transmission is complete so the receiver can determine if all the data was properly received. As long as the acknowledge request is received in a timely manner, it is not important how the receiver gets it. In some instances, it may be advantageous to send the acknowledge request in a separate packet. If the acknowledge request is to be embedded in the last packet, the space for the request must be located in the header of every packet, since any packet could be the last one. This results in wasted bandwidth since few of the total packets sent are the last packet in a burst.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to send the acknowledge request in an acknowledge request packet separate from the last packet in the predetermined number. This way, no space in the packet header must be reserved for acknowledge requests, reducing overhead on the network.

10. With regard to claim 4, Stevenson further discloses that sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the card comprises: detecting an acknowledge request at the central process in a packet received from the card (Determine if End Of Burst flag is set) (Page 54, Lines 19-21); and sending the acknowledge packet to the card from the central process (reply with then burst expected next)(Page 68, Lines 31-35).

11. With regard to claim 8, Applicant further discloses that it is known to gather statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically by gathering a current statistical data sample periodically at a first period (15 minutes) (Application, Page 1, Lines 18-19).

12. With regard to claim 12, while the system disclosed by Stevenson in view of Applicant's admitted prior art and Simmons shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to specifically disclose gathering second statistical

data on a second card within the network device periodically and sending the second statistical data to the central process.

However, it is well-known in the art that many network devices such as routers can and usually do consist of a plurality of network cards. In most cases, the cards are attached to different network segments and can record information about those segments. It would be advantageous for the central process to be able to retrieve data from all of the cards located in a network device so that it could receive the most accurate information regarding the network segments which the device is attached to.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to allow all of the cards located within a network device to send statistics to the central process for analysis. Since each card is usually connected to a different network segment, each card can provide statistics that are not available to the other cards in the device.

13. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevenson et al. in view of Applicant's admitted prior art in further view of Tanenbaum.

14. With regard to claim 5, while the system disclosed by Stevenson in view of Applicant's admitted prior art shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above regarding claim 1), it fails to disclose that sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the card comprises: detecting an acknowledge request at the central process in a packet received from the card; determining a number

of packets to be processed by the central process; comparing the number of packets to be processed to a predetermined threshold periodically; and sending the acknowledge packet to the card from the central process when the number of packets to be processed is less than the predetermined threshold.

Tanenbaum discloses a well-known flow control method for network transmissions which allows the receiver to stop the sender from sending any more data until the receiver has enough buffer space. Since the size of the packet bursts disclosed by Stevenson et al. are known to the receiver (window size), it can easily determine if enough space remains in the buffer. It would be logical and advantageous to delay the acknowledge packet until the buffer has enough space to hold another burst. As disclosed by Tanenbaum, delaying the acknowledgement until the receiver has time to process the packets prevents the sender from sending data faster than it can be processed by the receiver (Page 195, Line 37 to Page 196, Line 5). This prevents data from being lost due to buffer overflows.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the protocol disclosed by Stevenson in view of Applicant's admitted prior art to follow the structure taught by Tanenbaum. By delaying the acknowledge packet until the buffer is sufficiently empty to hold another burst transmission, date loss due to buffer overflow is prevented. This also reduces the load on the network since the lost data does not need to be retransmitted.

15. Claims 9-11 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevenson et al. in view of Applicant's admitted prior art in further view of Simmons et al. (US 6,167,054) in further view of Tanenbaum.

16. With regard to claim 9, while the system disclosed by Stevenson in view of Applicant's admitted prior art and Simmons shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that gathering statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically comprises adding the current statistical data sample to a data summary each time the current statistical data sample is gathered.

Tanenbaum discloses SNMP, a standard protocol for collecting and communicating information about network devices. Tanenbaum discloses that statistics are collected about network devices such as routers, which is stored in various fields in the devices. Many of the statistics, such as discarded packets, are added to a data summary each time the current statistical data sample is gathered (Page 642, Lines 11-15). As further disclosed by Tanenbaum, these summaries are particularly useful for managing routers (page 642, Lines 14-15).

Therefore, it would have been it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add the current statistical data sample to a data summary each time the current data sample is gathered. This allows the statistics to be collected over time and provide more meaningful information regarding

the performance of the network devices, such as the number of packets discarded by a router over time.

17. With regard to claim 10, while the system disclosed by Stevenson in view of Applicant's admitted prior art and Simmons shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that sending packets from the card to a central process comprises: sending packets containing at least a portion of the current statistical data sample from the card to the central process periodically at a first period; and sending packets containing at least a portion of the data summary from the card to the central process periodically at a second period.

Tanenbaum discloses SNMP, a standard protocol for collecting and communicating information about network devices. Tanenbaum discloses that statistics are collected about network devices such as routers, which is stored in various fields or tables in the devices. These statistics can then be requested by a management station (Page 643, Lines 8-19). A busy network would generate a significant amount of data, so the tables that contain summaries of the data could get very large. Transmitting a large table would be very time consuming and would create congestion on the network. It would be advantageous to transmit large tables at a different period than single variables, to prevent unnecessary congestion while still allowing the management station to access the variables at any time.

Therefore, it would have been it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to transmit large tables at a different

frequency than single variables since they consume large amounts of bandwidth and cause congestion in the network. For example, single variables could be transmitted every minute, while large summary tables may only be transmitted once per day during a period of low network usage. This would allow the statistics to be retrieved and analyzed without creating unnecessary congestion.

18. With regard to claim 11, as discussed regarding claim 10, the second period is longer than the first period (Every minute vs. Once Daily). This prevents the large data summaries from causing congestion by frequent transmission while still allowing individual variables to be transmitted frequently for real-time analysis of the network.

19. With regard to claim 13, while the system disclosed by Stevenson in view of Applicant's admitted prior art and Simmons shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that the data is first statistical data and wherein the method further comprises: gathering second statistical data on the card sending the second statistical data to the central process.

Tanenbaum discloses SNMP, a standard protocol for collecting and communicating information about network devices. Tanenbaum discloses that multiple types of statistics are collected about network devices such as routers, and stored in various fields or tables in the devices (Page 641, Lines 1-9 and Fig 7-37). These fields can subsequently be retrieved by a management station using various commands (Page 643, Fig 7-38). Since all of these statistics are collected for each device, it would

be advantageous to allow multiple data types to be collected and transmitted to the central process.

Therefore, it would have been it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to collect and send multiple types of data from the card to the central process. Many different statistics are useful to the central process for network management, but they are of little use if they remain on the devices unread.

20. Claims 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevenson et al. in view of Applicant's admitted prior art in further view of Simmons et al. (US 6,167,054) in further view of Ramakrishnan (US 6,167,029).

21. With regard to claim 7, while the system disclosed by Stevenson in view of Applicant's admitted prior art and Simmons shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that if the number of packets to be processed is below the predetermined threshold, then the indicated time is immediately.

Ramakrishnan discloses a similar system to Simmons in which pause frames are used to control the flow of a network transmission. Ramakrishnan discloses a pause frame with a pause time of 0, indicating that the sender can begin transmission immediately. This frame is used for resuming a paused transmission and would be particularly useful for resuming a station that was previously told to pause for a long time in the event that the buffer was cleared faster than originally estimated.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention as made to explicitly place a pause time of 0 in the acknowledge packet if buffer space is available. This would allow a paused sender to be resumed in the event that the buffer is cleared faster than the originally estimated, reducing the amount of time in which the network is not being utilized.

22. Claims 14-25 are rejected under the same rationale as claims 1-13, since they recite substantially identical subject matter. Any differences between the claims do not result in patentably distinct claims and all of the limitations are taught by the above cited art.

23. Claims 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over DeLuca et al. (US 6,792,455) view of Applicant's admitted prior art in further view of Stevenson et al.

24. With regard to claim 24, DeLuca discloses a method of managing distributed statistical data retrieval in a network device, comprising:

gathering a plurality of different types of statistical data (capacity planning and performance monitoring) on at least one card within the network device periodically (Col 10, Lines 44-47);

sending groups of packets from the card to a central process at staggered times, wherein each group of packets includes one of different types of statistical data wherein

the staggered times are determined by a plurality of polling timers, each corresponding to one of said statistical data types (capacity planning and performance monitoring data are reported at different intervals) (Col 11, Lines 36-53).

While DeLuca discloses that capacity planning and performance monitoring data is collected to monitor various hardware in a network, DeLuca fails to specifically disclose that the plurality of types of statistical data are collected on a card in the network device or that a size of each of the groups of packets is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process.

In the background of the present application, Applicant discloses that statistical data such as performance or fault monitoring data may be retrieved from distributed modules within a network device and stored in non-volatile memory. In addition, this data may be moved to a workstation for processing (Application, Page 1, Lines 6-11). This type of information would be of interest in a performance monitoring system such as the one disclosed by DeLuca, so it would have been advantageous to collect performance data from cards in network devices within the system.

Stevenson discloses a system for accelerating the transmission of large amounts of data. Stevenson teaches sending a group of packets (burst) (page 54, Lines 19-21) from a card to a central process wherein the size of each group of packets is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process (burst size is negotiated during set up of a burst connection)(at least Page 56, Lines 13-15). This would have been an

advantageous addition to the system disclosed by DeLuca since it would have dramatically accelerated the transmission of the gathered statistical data from the card to the central process.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to collect performance information from cards within a network in order to perform performance monitoring and capacity planning for that network and send groups of packets with a negotiated size in order to increase the transmission rate of the collected data.

25. With regard to claim 25, DeLuca further discloses gathering each of the different types of statistical data at a different time (performance monitoring data is gathered more frequently than capacity planning data)(Col 11, Lines 25-32).

Conclusion

26. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

27. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Aaron Strange whose telephone number is 571-272-3959. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glen Burgess can be reached on 571-272-3949. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AS
4/26/2006



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